



Gatton

Panic Grass

Panicum maximum

500mm+

5.5 - 8.0

Fertile and
Lighter

AgriCOTE
or Bare

Key Features

- Very palatable, shade tolerant grass with broad green leaves
- More vigorous and drought tolerant than Green Panic
- Suited to sub-tropical areas with fertile, well drained soils
- Responds quickly after rain

Description

Gatton Panic Grass is widely naturalised in the tropics. It grows naturally in open grasslands, usually under or near trees and shrubs, and along riverbanks. It is a summer growing perennial grass that is used widely in cattle grazing systems. Gatton is a highly palatable plant with good forage quality when green. It is also used for feeding fish in Vietnam. This variety has a tussocky growth habit and grows in clumps. Compared to Green Panic, it has a broader and darker green leaf, a more robust root system and ability to grow longer into the season.

Establishment

Recommended planting rates for AgriCOTE Pro-Tech for Gatton Panic are:
Marginal Dryland: 3 - 6Kg per Hectare
Good Dryland: 10 - 12Kg per Hectare
Irrigated: 12-15Kg per Hectare
Germination should be tested, since seed of some genotypes may not reach maximum germination until up to 18 months after harvest, while others may take only a few months. Seed can be drilled or broadcast at 3-6 kg/ha, and being a small seed, should be planted at no more than 1 cm deep. Rolling after sowing improves germination and establishment. Establishment fertiliser is necessary on infertile soils, using 20-40 kg/ha P, and about 50 kg/ha N if limited cultivation prior to planting.

Variety Management / Agronomy

Gatton Panic withstands heavy grazing during good seasons but this is inadvisable during dry periods as recovery will be slow. Similarly, heavy grazing is not advisable in the autumn as plant mortality can occur due to frosting. Graze lightly during the establishment year.

Pest / Disease Resistance

Ergot (*Claviceps* spp.), and other fungal diseases, *Conidiosporymyces ayresii*, *Fusarium roseum*, and *Tilletia* sp., can reduce seed yields when conditions are favourable to the pathogen. Seed production has also been adversely affected by a smut (*Ustilago* sp.) in Colombia and bunt in the Rift Valley of Kenya. A leaf spot caused by *Cercospora fusimaculosus* has been recorded in Puerto Rico. Gatton is very susceptible to spittlebug attack.

Performance

DM yields of 5 - 20 t/ha (commonly 10 t/ha) if high levels of N applied). Digestibility ranges from 64% (2 week regrowth) to 50% (8 week regrowth), and crude protein from 6-25% depending on age and N supply. In 12 week old regrowth, crude protein values range from 5-10%, P from 0.15-0.18%, Ca from 0.6-0.8% and Na from 0.07-0.12%.

Animal Production

Gatton is well eaten by all livestock, with particularly high intakes of young leafy growth. Can achieve up to 0.8 kg/hd/day live weight gains and up to 1,200 kg/ha/yr live weight gains. (commonly 300-500 kg/ha/yr live weight gains) depending primarily on stocking rate and N fertiliser rate.

Toxicity: In South Africa, it is suspected of causing "dikoor" in sheep, a photosensitisation disease, perhaps linked to smut infection. The plant is also said to cause fatal colic if eaten too wet or in excess.

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